



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**NEWS RELEASE**

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal

Treasurer Denise L. Nappier

Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner  
Edwin R. Rodriguez

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2004

**ATTORNEY GENERAL, TREASURER, CONSUMER PROTECTION SUE  
CRYSTAL MALL OWNER FOR ILLEGAL GIFT CARD FEES**

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, state Treasurer Denise L. Nappier and Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez today sued Simon Property Group, LP, owner of the Crystal Mall in Waterford, for illegally imposing expiration dates on gift cards and charging fees on unused balances.

Simon Property subtracts \$2.50 a month from Crystal Mall gift cards if an unused balance remains after six months. The company also levies a \$7.50 fee to reactivate an expired card. Both charges defy state law, which specifically prohibits such fees.

“Simon says – but Simon Property fails to tell the truth, when it subtracts \$2.50 a month from consumer gift cards six months or older,” Blumenthal said. “Simon illegally picks its customers’ pockets to reactivate cards with unused balances. Card purchasers intend to give a gift to friends or loved ones, not to an already wealthy mall owner. State law – as well as logic and fairness – demand that gift cards retain their value just like dollars in a drawer.”

“It is unconscionable that a business interested in encouraging customers and customer service would aggressively flout the law and take money out of consumers’ pockets,” Nappier said. “I hope that they will come to their senses and end this offensive and unreasonable action. The fees charged by Simon appear to be the most extreme in the industry. Consumers have every right to be outraged not only by the fees that they are charged, but by the company’s attitude that it is above the law.”

“It’s only fair to consumers to let them know up front of any restrictions that would prevent them from getting full value of what they intended to purchase,” Rodriguez said. “Anything short of full disclosure is clearly a violation of Connecticut’s Truth in Advertising laws.”

The suit also charges that Simon fails to properly inform customers of two additional fees: a 50-cent charge to check the card balance and a \$5 fee to replace a stolen or lost card.

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